



# **“Tailoring Public Relations Strategies to Different Green Markets”**

***8<sup>th</sup> Annual Green Power  
Marketing Conf., Nov. 4, 2003***

**Marci Grossman  
Green Mountain Energy Company**



# Agenda



- > **GMEC Overview**
- > **Basic PR Principles**
- > **4 PR Case Studies:**
- > **Other Awareness Building Tactics**
- > **Common Links . . . Thread**
- > **Q&A**

## **Green Mountain Energy Company**

- > Nation's largest clean energy provider**
- > Based in Austin, Texas; 180 employees**
- > Founded in 1997**
- > 600,000 customers in 7 states**
- > 35<sup>th</sup> largest electricity provider in U.S.**
- > 3-pronged business strategy:**
  - o Direct access
  - o Aggregations
  - o Utility partnering

# Basic PR Principles

## > In the beginning determine 8 things:

- Objectives/Goals
- Audience
- Strategy
- Budget
- Metrics
- Spokespeople
- Tactics
- Sustainability

# Case Study: Oregon Pat on Back

## Challenge/Situation

- > Generate coverage for PGE/Pacific Power
  - > Make news out of “old story” (established)
  - > Signups more than tripled since program start
- New marketing informational campaign

## Concept

- > Free massages thanking Oregonians for supporting renewable energy
  - o “Giving Oregonians a **Pat on the Back**”

# Pat on the Back “Thank You”

## **GMEC Execution/Tactics**

- > 2-day event downtown Portland; heated tents, paid radio ads, radio remote; sign up tables
- > Free back scratchers, tables, stickers, banners
- > Radio drop ins; targeting morning TV shows
- > Media alert, pitching, multiple news releases

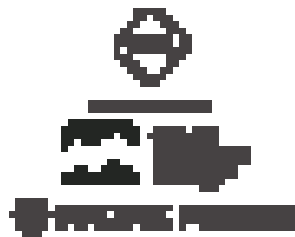
## **The Results**

- > 3 Fox Morning live TV shots; industry coverage
- > 60+ enrollments; PUC chair; 400+ massages
- > Environmental groups attended/participated
- > Communicated messages about program

## Banners: Oregon Pat on the Back

**FREE  
MASSAGES**

Energy  
company



Original name:  
Oregon

Giving Oregonians a  
"Pat on the Back"  
for supporting  
renewable  
energy



# Massage Time -- Live on Fox TV





## Double Massage with Super Earth



# A New Partnership

NATIONAL  
SKI AREAS  
ASSOCIATION



N S A A

# Cast Study: Sustainable Slopes

## **Challenge/Situation**

- > National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) 3rd annual Sustainable Slopes Outreach Day, Feb. 22, 2003
- > Participating resorts communicated "Keep Winter Cool" message on global warming and climate change
- > Campaign encouraged skiers to take action: purchase renewable energy – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- > GMEC wanted to participate and stand out; generate national/local coverage; drive sales

## **Concept**

- > GMEC teamed up with NSAA to support campaign through wind tags and sales presence at ski areas

# Keeping Winter Cool

## **GMEC Execution/Tactics**

- > Reps at NY/OR educated and signed up skiers
- > Offset main chair lift's electricity usage at 5 ski areas
- > 5 releases; Super Earth AP wire photo; mini wind turbines to TV stations, media alerts, b-roll

## **The Results**

- > Local/national/trade; print and broadcast coverage; 2 live CNN interviews, widespread AP photo pickup
- > Got message out: choosing Green Mountain Energy™ easy way to help “Keep Winter Cool”
- > Wind tags (18,000 kwh) avoided production of approx. 10 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> -- as much as a car makes in 23,000 miles
- > Received “**2003 Green Power Beacon Award**”



# Super Earth at Mt. Hood



# Super Earth Keeping Winter Cool





# Super Earth and His Little Friends



# Case Study: Liberty Bell

## **Challenge/Situation**

- > GMEC awarded 3-year contract to provide renewable energy in Philadelphia for:
  - o Liberty Bell Pavilion: Liberty Bell Center; other historic buildings in Independence National Historical Park
- > GMEC was taking over contract from other supplier
- > Challenge: how to take “old news” and give it “new life”

## **Concept**

- > Developed visually interesting event using political celebrities and help create buzz about green power
- > Goal: build credibility and awareness for GMEC; bring green energy to life; position as industry leader

# Liberty Bell Goes Green



## **GMEC Execution/Tactics**

- > Balcony overlooked Indep. Hall/Liberty Bell Pavilion
- > Patriotic entertainment; Ben Franklin actor conducted event; Descendants of Signers of Declaration of Independence
- > Symbolic dedication: 200-foot tall wind turbine
- > EPA head Whitman spoke at news conference
- > Media alert, pitching, release, radio news release, photos, b-roll

## **The Results**

- > Coverage (6 print, 3 TV, 2 radio); trade/national
- > Radio News Release garnered more than 150 hits
- > Several leads for commercial and government facilities contracts



# Benjamin Franklin at Liberty Bell



# EPA Chief at Liberty Bell



# Case Study: Houston Habitat for Humanity



HOUSTON HABITAT  
FOR HUMANITY



# Habitat for Humanity Goes Green

## **Challenge/Situation**

- > GMEC was sponsor of Houston KRBE Earth Day Festival – Memorial Day -- a month after Earth Day
- > Create press event around/at Festival
- > Strengthen community presence in Houston

## **Concept**

- > Install one Kwh solar system on roof of Houston Habitat for Humanity House close to being finished
- > It would be the first solar habitat home in Houston
- > Integrate 17-year old high school student who raised nearly \$50,000 to build Habitat home

# Houston Habitat for Humanity

## **GMEC Execution/Tactics**

- > Presented with 3 PR opportunities:
  - o Solar Panel installation; handing over keys; giving student and school trophies
- > Press release, media alert, pitching, hundreds of radio spots, interviews, promos on KRBE

## **The Results**

- > KRBE promos reached thousands; 30,000 Houstonians attended KRBE event
- > 20 + stories: *Houston Chronicle*, *Houston Business Journal*, extensive broadcast and trade coverage

# Habitat House Solar Installation

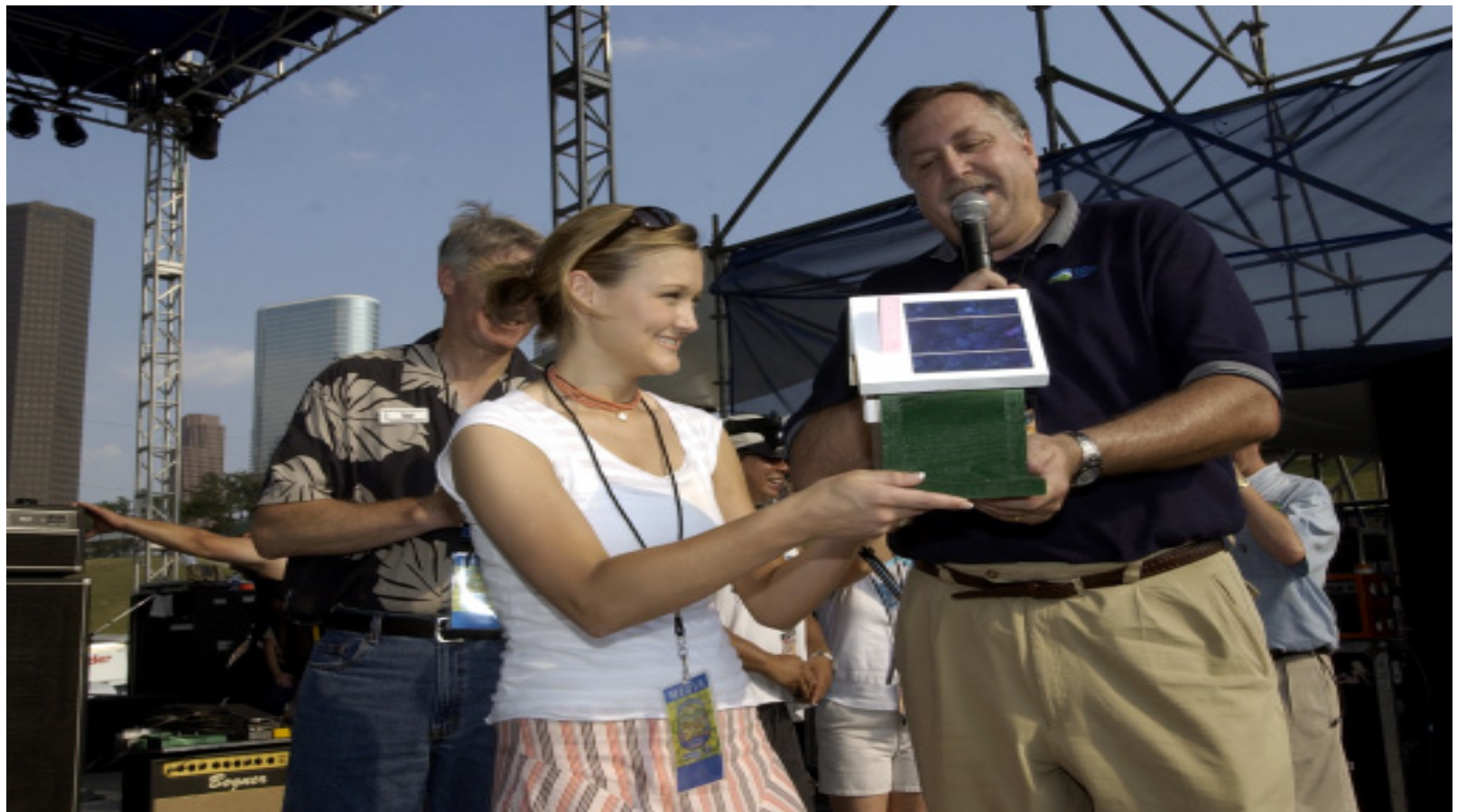


# Solar Panels Are Getting Hot





# GMEC CEO Presents Trophy to Houston High School Student



# Print Coverage Sample





# Indo-American News Coverage

HOUSTON—Green Mountain Energy Company, the nation's largest provider of cleaner electricity, and Houston Habitat for Humanity teamed up to support clean, renewable energy in Houston by installing a 1.2 kWh solar array on the roof of a recently completed Habitat for Humanity home in Houston. Donated by Green Mountain Energy Company, the solar array was installed on the roof of the new home of Muhidin Omar on Friday, May 9, 2003. The home, which is located in the Wood Glen subdivision in Northeast Houston, was funded and built by the graduating class of St. John's High School in River Oaks as their senior class project.

The home was built thanks to the efforts of 18-year old senior Annie Criner and her graduating class at St. John's High School. Criner spearheaded the project, challenging fellow classmates to raise the needed \$50,000 and build the home.

The Omar family, who immigrated to Houston in September 1997 from Somalia, will live in the new Habitat Home in mid to late June. The Omars were forced to find work and support nine children – seven of their own and two they adopted after Omar's brother died.

"The Omars' experience is really an amazing story," said Criner. "But what's more amazing is that they all came out and pitched in on the project."

The solar array, installed on the house thanks to Green Mountain Energy Company, is a first for Houston Habitat for Humanity.

"We feel this is a great part-



Milby Hart, Executive Director of Houston Habitat for Humanity, talks with Muhidin Omar (right) in front of his new home



Terrence Brand, left, and Zachary Paxton, both of Jane's Electric in Austin, install a solar array donated by Green Mountain Energy Company on the roof of Muhidin Omar's new home

nership," said Milby Hart, executive director at Houston Habitat for Humanity. "It's exciting to be a part of the first

solar Habitat Home in Houston. This creates a genuine opportunity to continue building homes in the Houston area while giving

## ***River Oaks Examiner***

>



## **Other PR Tactics to Create Awareness**

- > Surveys and Contests**
- > Press Tours**
- > Consumer Tips**
- > Leverage national events (Earth Day)**
- > Work with third parties**
- > Donations/Cause Related Marketing**
- > MAT Releases**
- > Radio News Releases/Video News Releases**
- > Hot Air Balloon**

# Green Mountain Energy Hot Air Balloon



## Common PR Links...Regardless of Market

- > Supported business objectives
- > Integrated with marketing, sales, events, etc.
- > Plan, Plan, Plan in advance. Be proactive
- > Vehicle to create awareness, buzz, seed market
- > Creative strategy/tactics; stood out thru noise
- > Created visuals, news, events; made them relevant
- > Marketing followed or was simultaneous with PR
- > Consistent messaging across the board
- > Didn't use jargon; spoke in understandable terms
- > Educated people about Green Energy and its benefits
- > Partnered with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties added credibility
- > And Remember To:
  - o Sustain PR efforts....not just one time event
  - o Can do a lot . . . on a little budget